In the Claims

Please cancel, without prejudice, claims 3 and 8.

Please amend the remaining claims as follows:

WE CLAIM:

1 1. (currently amended) A network switch for resolving requests from a plurality of host

2   initiators by scheduling access to a plurality of disk storage devices, the network switch

3   comprising:

4   (a) a switched fabric comprising a plurality of switching elements, each switching

5   element comprising:

6   a plurality of bi-directional switched fabric ports; and

7   a control input connected to receive switch control data for selectively

8   configuring the switching element in order to interconnect the bi-directional

9   switched fabric ports;

10   (b) a memory for storing a routing and scheduling program; and

11   (c) a microprocessor, responsive to the requests, for executing the steps of the routing

12   and scheduling program to generate the switch control data to transmit scheduled

13   requests through the bi-directional switched fabric ports,

14   wherein:

15   at least one of the plurality of switching elements comprises a disk storage interface

16   for connecting to a selected one of the disk storage devices;

17   the microprocessor for scheduling access to the plurality of disk storage devices

18   through the disk storage interface;

19   the disk storage interface for receiving scheduling data from the selected one of the

20   disk storage devices;

21   the memory for receiving the scheduling data via the bi-directional switched fabric

22   ports of a selected number of the switching elements; ~~and~~

23   the scheduling data is processed according to a priority such that the selected

24   switching elements transfer the scheduling data through the bi-directional

25   switched fabric ports before transferring data associated with the scheduled

26   requests;

27   each disk storage device comprises a disk and a head; and

28   the scheduling data comprises a radial location of the head relative to the disk within

29   each disk storage device.

1 2. (previously presented) The network switch as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one

2   switching element further comprises a disk storage device connected to the disk storage

3   interface.

1 3. (canceled)

1 4. (currently amended) The network switch as recited in claim 3̶1̲, wherein the scheduling

2   data further comprises a circumferential location of the head relative to the disk within

3   each disk drive.

1 5. (previously presented) The network switch as recited in claim 1, wherein the switching

2   elements further comprise a plurality of virtual lanes, wherein:

3   (a) at least one of the virtual lanes is reserved for transferring data associated with the

4   scheduled requests;

5   (b) at least one of the virtual lanes is reserved for transferring the scheduling data; and

6   (c) the virtual lane for transferring the scheduling data comprises a higher priority than

7   the virtual lane for transferring the data associated with the scheduled requests.

1   6.   (previously presented) The network switch as recited in claim 1, wherein the scheduling

2   data is communicated to the memory through the bi-directional switched fabric ports

3   according to an isochronous protocol.

1   7.   (currently amended) A method of resolving requests from a plurality of host initiators by

2   scheduling access to a plurality of disk storage devices connected to a network switch,

3   the network switch comprising a switched fabric comprising a plurality of switching

4   elements, the method comprising the steps of:

5   (a) transmitting through the switching elements scheduling data from the plurality of disk

6   storage devices to a memory;

7   (b) evaluating the scheduling data in order to schedule the requests from the host

8   initiators; and

9   (c) transmitting data associated with the scheduled requests through the switching

10   elements to the plurality of disk storage devices,

11   wherein:

12   -the scheduling data is processed according to a priority such that the switching

13   elements transfer the scheduling data before transferring data associated with the

14   scheduled requests;

15   <u>each disk storage device comprises a disk and a head; and</u>

16   <u>the scheduling data comprises a radial location of the head relative to the disk within</u>

17   <u>each disk storage device.</u>

1   8.   (canceled)

1   9.   (currently amended) The method as recited in claim 8<u>7</u>, wherein the scheduling data

2   further comprises a circumferential location of the head relative to the disk within each

3   disk drive.

1   10.   (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 7, wherein the switching elements

2   further comprise a plurality of virtual lanes, wherein:

3   (a) at least one of the virtual lanes is reserved for transferring data associated with the

4   scheduled requests;

5   (b) at least one of the virtual lanes is reserved for transferring the scheduling data; and

6   (c) the virtual lane for transferring the scheduling data comprises a higher priority than

7   the virtual lane for transferring the data associated with the scheduled requests.

1   11.   (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 7, wherein the scheduling data is

2   communicated to the memory through the switching elements according to an

3   isochronous protocol.